ADVERTISEMENT.

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A DISCOURSE AGAINST PURGATORY.

LONDON,

Printed for *Brabazon Aylmer*, at the Three *Pigeons* against the *Royal Exchange* in *Cornhill*. MDCLXXXV.

A DISCOURSE AGAINST Purgatory.

AMONG all the Errours of the Church of *Rome*, the Superſtructures ſhe hath made of *hay* and *ſtubble* upon the ſubſtantial Doctrine of Chriſtianity; this Fable of *Purgatory* is one of the moſt notorious, invented on purpoſe to encreaſe the treaſury of the Church, by putting the groſſeſt abuſes upon the ignorant and unwary People: over whom ſhe hath got ſuch an abſolute dominion, as that ſhe can make them believe what ſhe pleaſes, and then can impoſe her additions to the word of God, as infallible decrees. How eaſily are the multitude led into bye-paths, when that light of Scripture is taken away from their eyes, which God revealed on purpoſe, that by the ſearch thereof they might find Eternal Life? For the Scriptures are the moſt full and complete ſyſteme of God's Laws, the moſt ſufficient

and certain means of Man's Salvation: I cannot then but wonder how it came to paſs, that this middle ſtate, called *Purgatory*, hanging thus between Heaven and Hell, was not known to the Pen-men of God's word, or if it were known, that they ſhould either be ſo envious of the Churches happineſs, or ſo forgetfull of the work they took in hand, which was to write the whole Goſpel of Chriſt, as not ſo much as one of them ſhould give us notice of this place. But this new Doctrine, with many others, was introduced when the World was in the dark; for in the ninth and tenth Centuries, ſuch a General ignorance and ſtupidity had ſeized the minds of Men, that ſcarce any one knew what the Doctrine of Chriſt was: when the World was thus ſtupid and Superſtitious, Men were inclined to believe ſtrange things: upon this fair opportunity, ſome cunning Men drew the ſimple People into the Belief of the moſt abſurd Doctrines, under the notion of being great and profound Myſteries; the gallantry of Faith, they imagined, was mightily ſhewn, in ſwallowing downright Contradictions: when this breach was once made upon the minds of Men, then any errour might enter, though as ſenſeleſs and ridiculous as *Purgatory* it ſelf.

Which Opinion I will firſt ſhew to have no foundation in the Canonical Scripture.

Secondly, For what reaſons it was introduced.

Thirdly, What we are to believe in this matter.

Laſtly, I ſhall conclude with ſome reflexions upon the Authours of this, and other new-invented Doctrines in the Church of *Rome*.

Firſt I am to prove, that this opinion hath no foundation in Scripture. The *Papiſts* themſelves are ſenſible enough of this; therefore they put all the falſe

falſe *gloſſes* they can upon it, ſo that the People may diſcern nothing in the Scripture it ſelf, though it be as clear as the Sun: for by this craft they have their living, as *Demetrius* and his *Crafts-men* had heretofore. But let them fairly and honeſtly lay open the Books of God to every one's eye, without any unreaſonable interpretations, or ſpurious additions made to it; and I doubt not, but the vanity of aſſerting *Purgatory* will ſoon appear.

Now in *Scripture* there are matters of a different nature.

I. Ancient Records; the Hiſtory of former Times: and theſe things were far better known, than they are now at this diſtance of time.

II. There are things that are wholly expired and out of date, and ſo of leſs uſe to us, as the whole *Moſaical Diſpenſation.*

III. In *Scripture* there are matters of Prophecy fitted for thoſe times, which they then far better underſtood than we do now, and wherein they were far more concerned than we are; for they are *tranſactions* partly of things performed, which when fulfilled, were beſt underſtood.

IV. There are matters of deep *Philoſophy*, aſwell as great Myſteries, which do not belong to the buſineſs of Religion.

Laſtly. There is the moral part of Religion, and our Saviour's Doctrine; in which two our Religion conſiſts: and this is that Doctrine which hath brought *life and immortality to light*, but hath not revealed any ſuch thing as *Purgatory*: which will appear, if we conſider what *Bellarmine* hath alledged in the defence thereof, both out of the *Old* and *New Teſtament.* According to him, the Texts for *Purgatory* in the Old Teſtament are firſt the Faſting of *David* for

Saul

Saul and *Jonathan*, 2 *King.* 1. 12. and again, 2. *Sam.* 3. 35. for the death of *Abner*. Which Faſting of *David* muſt be as he fanſies, for the obtaining of ſomething for them at God's hands after their deaths, and when nothing can be obtained for Mens Souls that are already in Heaven or Hell, it follows, that ſome Mens Souls are in neither of thoſe places, but muſt be in *Purgatory*.

We Anſwer; that Mourning and Faſting were never practiſed upon a deſign of procuring thereby any benefit to the Deceaſed: but they were cuſtoms onely, and *ceremonies* made uſe of to teſtifie the honour and reſpect they had for their Friends departed; and all Nations have had their particular ways of diſcharging their laſt Duty to their Friends, when they have left this World, without any thought of doing them any ſervice thereby in the World to come. The *Cardinal* is not contented with this Argument, but he produces other places of the Old Teſtament to ſupport his opinion; in the behalf whereof he cites almoſt every Text, wherein there is the word *anger*, or *fire*, or *burning*, or *purging*, or *cleanſing*: it were an infinite task to anſwer every thing he alledges, and altogether needleſs, becauſe there is not ſo much as any ſhew or colour of proof in any one of them. Therefore we will paſs to thoſe Texts of the *New Teſtament*, which he ſays are for him.

Firſt; He alledges that of St. *Matthew*, 12. 32. *Whoſoever ſpeaketh a word againſt the Son of Man, it ſhall be forgiven him; but whoſoever ſpeaketh againſt the Holy Ghoſt, it ſhall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, nor that which is to come.* This *world to come*, if you will believe him, muſt needs be *Purgatory*. Now by the *world to come*, nothing elſe is meant in Scripture, but that everlaſting ſtate which we

we ſhall enter upon after death, in which all agree there ſhall be no middle ſtate between that of Heaven and the other of Hell; therefore the *world to come* and *Purgatory* are inconſiſtent: for one Scripture is the beſt Comment upon another; ſo that this way of Expreſſion, οὐκ ἐν τούτῳ τῷ αἰῶνι, οὐδ' ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι, neither in this World, nor that which is to come, is made eaſie and plain by St *Mark*, *c.* 3. *v.* 29. ὃς δ' ἂν βλασφημήσῃ εἰς τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον, οὐκ ἔχει ἄφεσιν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, ἀλλ' ἔνοχός ἐστιν αἰωνίου κρίσεως· now this manner of Expreſſion in St. *Matthew*, οὐκ ἀφεθήσεται αὐτῷ, οὔτ' ἐν τούτῳ τῷ αἰῶνι οὔτ' ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι, it ſhall not be forgiven him, neither in *this world*, nor in that which is *to come*, ſignifies juſt ſo much, and no more, as οὐκ ἔχει ἄφεσιν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, hath never forgiveneſs, but is in danger of Eternal Damnation; as much as to ſay, this ſin is of that malignant and heinous nature, that it juſtly deſerves endleſs puniſhment, and will never be pardoned.

II. Another is that of the 1 *Cor.* 3. *They themſelves ſhall be ſaved, but ſo as by fire, or but as through fire*; which fire (he ſays) muſt be the Fire of *Purgatory*. We Anſwer, that theſe words ſeem to allude to thoſe of *Zachar*, 13. 9. where he ſaith, I will bring the third part *through fire, and refine them, as ſilver is refined*: which is a fair warning to men, that the Doctrines they embrace, and their practices according to them, may be ſuch as will bear the ſevereſt tryal, that they may not be like *wood*, *hay* and *ſtubble*, which will not endure the fire: for the Particle (ὡς) is a Particle of ſimilitude, and the whole phraſe, ὡς διὰ πυρός, is proverbial, uſed in Scripture aſwell as in other Authours, to ſignifie a narrow eſcape out of a great danger; juſt as St. *Peter* expreſſes it, 1 *Pet.* 3. 20. δι' ὕδατος, ſo here it is διὰ πυρός, he ſhall be ſaved with great difficulty, ſo as through fire.

III. A

III. A Third place is that of 1 *Cor.* 15. concerning *Baptiſm for the Dead*; here the *Cardinal* ventures very far, even to the drawing of *fire* out of *water*, the *flames* of *Purgatory* out of theſe *waſhings*: Baptiſm for the Dead, and Prayer for the Dead is the ſame thing in his ſenſe; though it be diſcordant to the harmony and ſcope of the whole Scripture. For the word Βαπτίζεσθαι, in Scripture ſignifies to Waſh, or purify by Waſhing; it muſt be rendred in the ſame ſenſe here: for as all Nations had their peculiar Rites of Burial, ſo had the *Jews*; who were uſed to waſh the Carkaſſes of the Dead with *warm water*, *Camomile*, and *dryed Roſes* being put into it. This Βάπτισμος, or uſe of Baptiſation was threefold: The Firſt, ἀπὸ νεκρῶν, a waſhing from the pollution contracted by the touch of the dead Carkaſs. The Second was Βάπτισμος τῶν νεκρῶν, a waſhing of the dead Corpſe its ſelf, as *Tabitha* was waſhed. The Laſt was the Baptization in the Text, Βάπτισμος ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν, in uſe onely among ſome miſguided Chriſtians: for the Apoſtle undertook to convince the *Corinthians* of the truth of the Reſurrection, from their own fooliſh and erroneous Cuſtoms; in effect telling them, that their uſage of Baptizing the *living* for the *dead*, was vain and impertinent, if there were no Reſurrection: for if the Dead riſe not at all, to what end were theſe Funeral Solemnities! Why was there *vicarium tale Baptiſma*, as *Tertullian* calls it; the manner whereof is thus deſcribed by *Epiphanius*: When any *Catechumeniſt* dyed, ſome living perſon, being placed under the *bed*, they came to the deceaſed Party, and aked him whether he would be Baptized; the *Party under the bed* anſwered, that he would; whereupon they immediately Baptized him *for the dead*: a ſilly ſuperſtitious Action! Yet from this

this Topick St. *Paul* proves a Reſurrection to them, as he did once the exiſtence of the true God, from an Inſcription on an Altar in *Athens*, to one *that was unknown*: but *Bellarmine* would perſwade us, that by this waſhing they intended to afford their Friends ſome relief in *Purgatory*, and he might with as much reaſon have told us, that *the Sea burns.*

IV. The Fourth place is that of St. *Matthew* 5. 25. *Agree with thine adverſary quickly, whilſt thou art in the way with him, leſt at any time the adverſary deliver thee to the Judge, and the Judge deliver thee to the Officer, and thou be caſt into priſon; verily I ſay unto thee, thou ſhalt by no means come out thence, till thou haſt paid the uttermoſt farthing.* Now if the *Cardinal* may be credited, *Purgatory* is this Priſon, and the Priſoner ſhut up therein, is in a condition to pay the uttermoſt farthing, by the help of Prayers, Maſſes, and the Pope's Indulgence: whereas all this is an Allegory, whereby we are taught to reconcile our ſelves to God, the great Judge of Heaven and Earth, by leading a Godly, Righteous and Sober life, whilſt we are in the Way, or on this ſide the Grave; for if we neglect our repentance and amendment of life in this our day, before the night approaches, wherein *no man can work*; we run the hazard of being caſt into a *priſon*, out of which there is no Redemption; for the Text ſays, *We ſhall by no means come out thence, till we have paid the uttermoſt farthing*; which will be never, becauſe we ſhall never be able to diſcharge this Debt. We are infinitely beholding to the goodneſs and mercy of God, who hath appointed his onely Begotten Son to be our Surety, and to deliver us out of this Priſon; how juſtly then may the Saviour of the World be angry with *Papiſts*, for pretending to caſt ſimple people into I know not

what Priſon, and to torture them with painted Fires, in ſpight of that Redemption which he hath made for the whole World?

V. The Fifth place is that of *Matth.* 5. 22. *Whoſoever is angry with his Brother without a cauſe, ſhall be in danger of the Judgement, and whoſoever ſhall ſay to his Brother, Raca, ſhall be in danger of the Counſel: but whoſoever ſhall ſay, thou Fool, ſhall be in danger of Hell Fire.* The laſt onely of theſe ſins, *Bellarmine* obſerves, ſhall be puniſhed with Hell Fire; conſequently after this life, the puniſhment of leſſer ſins will be in *Purgatory*. But this is no true inference; becauſe after this life, there will be no diſtinction of Courts of Juſtice, as there was among the *Jews* in our Saviour's time; then all Judicature ſhall appertain to Chriſt and his Apoſtles: therefore this Text cannot be rightly underſtood without conſidering the words before and after it. Now our Saviour in this Chapter was about to interpret the Law of *Moſes*, which the *Jews* thought they had fulfilled, when they had not tranſgreſſed the Grammatical ſenſe thereof; this made them believe that the Sixth Commandment was not broken, but by killing a Man; nor the Seventh, but by actually committing Adultery or Fornication: whereas our Saviour forbids the inward Anger of a Man againſt his Brother without a cauſe, the puniſhment whereof at the Day of Judgment ſhall be Hell Fire. How *Purgatory* then ſhould be maintained from theſe words, I cannot imagine, unleſs the *Papiſts* can make it out, that as the *Jews* had divers Temporal Courts of Juſtice, ſo God Almighty will have three diſtinct Courts of Juſtice hereafter, and will inflict different puniſhments for Sin.

VI. The

VI. The Sixth place is *Luk.* 16. 9. *Make ye friends of the unrighteous Mammon, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlaſting habitations*; Invocation of Saints, the Papiſts ſay may be proved from this Text, but I cannot ſee upon what grounds. We are adviſed to make the Poor our Friends by Charity, and by giving them ſome of our Riches, that we may have in this life the benefit of their Prayers, and thereby make God himſelf our Debtour; for he *that giveth to the Poor, lendeth to the Lord.*

Laſtly; The Champions for Popery alledge for *Purgatory*, 1 *Pet.* 3. 19, 20. *By which alſo he went and preached to the Spirits in priſon*; by which they undrſtand the Deſcent of Chriſt into *Purgatory*, to looſe ſome Souls there from their Torments. But ἐν ᾧ, by which, relates to πνεύματι, Spirit; that is ſet down juſt before it; by which Spirit in *Noah*, who is called a *Preacher of Righteouſneſs*, Chriſt Jeſus is ſaid to Preach to the Generation of Men immediately before the Floud, whoſe Souls are now ſhut up in Hell for their Diſobedience. For this Preaching was not performed by an immediate act of the Son of God, as if he perſonally had appeared on Earth, and actually Preached to the Old World; but he did it by the Miniſtry of a Prophet: for to doe any thing by another, that is not able to perform it without him, as much demonſtrates the exiſtence of the principal cauſe, as if he did it of himſelf without any intervening inſtrument. But if *Purgatory* be intended in theſe words, we muſt be mightily miſtaken in our conceptions about a future ſtate; then the days that follow after Death do afford opportunities of obtaining a better Life; then may Men riſe from a life of torments to a life of joy: whereas the Angels had one Inſtant, either to ſtand

or fall eternally; what that Inſtant was to them, that this Life is to us: for after Death immediately follows Judgment; the Soul at its departure from the Body, knows its doom, and what it muſt truſt to for ever. The Schoolmen labour all they can to deſtroy the true Belief of Chriſtians in this matter, and have the face to propoſe it as a matter of Faith, that Chriſt delivered the Souls of the Saints from the very ſuburbs of Hell, which they call *Limbus of the Fathers.* It is pity but the wits of theſe Men had been better employed, than in building ſuch Caſtles in the Air, or in filling Mens thoughts with imaginary Ideas of ſtrange places in the other World, that have no foundation in Scripture; which is our ſureſt guide againſt all ſuch Notional wandrings, opens our eyes to perceive the reality of things, and clears the brain, not onely from Darkneſs, but from falſe and uſeleſs Light, eſpecially the *Ignis fatuus* of *Purgatory*; which ſerves onely to miſlead Men out of the way, and ſo loſe them in the bogs or woods of perpetual errour; which teaches us to believe quite otherwiſe than the Papiſts do; for ſuch as theſe are the inſtructions of the Holy Spirit, *Joh.* 5. 24. *Verily, verily I ſay unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that ſent me, hath everlaſting life; he ſhall not come into condemnation, but is paſſed from death to life.* Mat. 18. 8. *Wherefore if thy hand, or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and caſt them from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life, halt or maimed, rather than having two hands and two feet, to be caſt into everlaſting fire.* Mat. 19. 29. *And every one that hath forſaken houſes or Brethren, or Siſters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands for my names ſake, ſhall receive an hundredfold, and ſhall inherit everlaſting life.* Mat. 25.

Mat. 25. 46. *And theſe ſhall go into everlaſting puniſhment, but the righteous into life everlaſting.* In the ſixteenth Chapter of St. *Luke's* Goſpel, from the nineteenth to the one and thirtieth Verſe, we reade how the Rich Man was caſt into Torments, and the Poor Man lodged in *Abraham's* Boſome: between the places of both theſe Men, there was μέγα χάσμα, a Wide Gulph, never to be paſſed; inſomuch, that *Dives* did deſpair of any relief out of his miſery, when the gift of a drop of water to cool his tongue would not be granted him. If we can aſſent to what the Papiſts ſay, they have paved a large Cauſ-way over this wide Gulph, and have opened a very eaſie paſſage from a life of torments to that of eternal happineſs. For by virtue of ſome prayers, oblations and indulgences, they have made the way broad to Heaven, and narrow to Hell; a Man that hath money in his pocket cannot be damned, and a Camel may as ſoon paſs through the eye of a needle, as a poor Man be ſaved.

But granting that the written word of God hath nothing of Purgatory in it, the *Romaniſts* will tell you, that Tradition will defend them in the belief thereof: which word, *Tradition*, they are wont to alledge to give a colour to moſt of their preſent innovations.

Wherefore in the ſecond place I am to ſhew how they are miſtaken in this caſe of Tradition alſo, and to declare for what reaſons the Fiction of Purgatory was firſt ſet on foot. The Traditions we receive as good and authentick, are the Doctrines which we now reade in the holy Scriptures; but I have proved *Purgatory* to be none of theſe: therefore thoſe of the *Romiſh* Perſwaſion muſt mean ſome other Tradition, that is not to be found written in the word of God. But here we ought to obſerve, that the Scripture

Scripture in this caſe, aſwell as in all others, is the onely rule of Faith; therefore *Traditions*, *Councils* and *Fathers* are onely to be uſed as helps to underſtand the Scripture better, but not to be entertained as any rule of Faith; in which caſe we are bound to be of the Apoſtle's mind. *If I, or an Angel from Heaven preach any other doctrine than that which we have delivered, let him be accurſed.* For this reaſon we cannot receive thoſe Doctrines for truth, which the Church of *Rome* preſſes upon our Belief upon the account of Tradition: eſpecially when we conſider with what ſtrategems of force and fraud this Church hath laboured to keep the People in ignorance for the ſake of her New Doctrines, that they may be ſwallowed the more glibly; which is an artifice to enſlave Mankind, by diſabling them either to ſee or know what ſhe is a-doing: whereas if we would keep up the honour and privilege of Humane nature; if we would preſerve our Bibles from being ſequeſtred into Huckſters hands; if we have any regard to God's pure and undefiled Religion, we muſt reſolve againſt the Novelties of Popery. For in the true Religion, there is nothing which the reaſon of Mankind can challenge; wherein the judgments of Men may not have ſo good an account, as to receive full and ample ſatisfaction. And to ſpeak the truth, I do not underſtand that there is any Religion farther than that which is owned among Proteſtants: what more is to be found among the Papiſts, is accommodated to ſerve ſome bye-ends and purpoſes. For this reaſon, a great Abbat in the *Roman* Church was wont to ſay, that he did greatly ſuſpect his Religion muſt needs fail, being not built upon ſo firm a Rock as was ſuppoſed; becauſe there was ſo little Ground for many Tenents of

of it in the Word of God: I may add, that there is as little in the principles of God's Creation, or in that which we call Natural Religion.

If this be ſo, I wonder with what face they can ſtill ſtand up for *Purgatory*, or imagine ſuch a ſtate, in which the Souls of Men are for a time ſhut up, untill they are ſet at liberty by the Prayers of the Living, or a Pope's Indulgence: but to juſtifie themſelves in this unpardonable abuſe of the Chriſtian Religion, they tell us, that ſome Chriſtians in Old Time did make uſe of Prayers and Commemorations for thoſe who died in the true Faith of our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt. Now the queſtion is, whether the *Suppplicants*, that uſed this kind of Devotion, intended by theſe means to obtain a pardon for the Criminals that were condemned to this Priſon. The right underſtanding of this Cuſtome will put an end to the Controverſie; and who can better inform us of their meaning than they themſelves, or thoſe that lived in the ſame Age with them; amongſt whom may be reckoned *Dionyſius* the *Areopagite*, who treats particularly of the Rites uſed in their Burials of the Dead: this Authour tells us that the Biſhop was wont in the midſt of the Congregation to make a Prayer of Thankſgiving unto God for his reſtraining the power of the Devil over Mankind; as alſo for his mercifull admittance of ſincere Penitents into his Grace and Favour. And farther prays, that God would place them in the Land of the Living, ſeat them in *Abraham's* Boſome, where, now they reſt from their Labours here, they may be received into a place of Light, Peace and Joy everlaſting: this was the end of their Prayers for thoſe that Reſt in the Lord. Now, leſt by miſtake we ſhould infer from hence, as ſome have done, that the

the Souls of good Men departed this Life are not yet *in Paradiſe*, but remain for ſome time in a condition of darkneſs, loſs and pain; there to be prepared for Heaven by certain Purgations, and thence to be diſcharged by the ſatisfactions and prayers of the Living; the ſame excellent Writer hath mentioned onely two diviſions of the Dead: of thoſe *that have lived well*, and of thoſe *that have lived ill*; whereas the upholders of Purgatory have lodged them in three diſtinct Apartments. But the Primitive Church knew but two places of entertainment for the Dead after this Life, Heaven, and Hell; the firſt for good, the latter for evil Men; one for the Believer, the other for the Infidel; Heaven is for him whoſe *ſins are remitted*, and Hell is for him whoſe *ſins are retained*. Indeed ſome Ancient Doctours did ſeem to doubt, what that place was which the Souls of Men did abide in, till they ſhould be reunited to their Bodies in the Reſurrection; ſuppoſing for a while they *lay under the Altars*. But afterwards the Church of *Rome* found it more profitable to build for them this place of *Purgatory*, a place wherein ſhe pretends the Souls of Men are cleanſed by Burning, and made fit for Heaven.

For as ſoon as the World was put into a great Fright about *Purgatory*, then came in the ſale of Indulgences; which the ſubtile Prieſts put off for ſecurities againſt the vain fears and dangers to be met withall in this place: this indeed is a Doctrine of good advantage to the Church of *Rome*, but moſt diſgracefull to the Chriſtian Religion; for what can be more ſo, than to defraud Chriſt himſelf of the Title and Merit which he ever had, of being The onely Redeemer of Mankind; as if he had not by his Sacrifice on the Croſs fully ſatisfied the Divine

vine Juſtice, but that this great work was to be done by *Pope's Bulls*, *Indulgences* and *Maſſes*? But for all this we will oblige our ſelves to believe the *Roman* Confeſſours, if they can from Scripture, Reaſon, or untainted Tradition ſhew us where God hath told Men, that he is pleaſed with theſe things, and is reſolved to accept of them inſtead of a good and Chriſtian Life. For this was always the Faith of the Primitive Church, that the ſtate and condition of a Man into which he paſſeth after Death ſhall never be changed; this I could prove out of *Juſtin Martyr ad Orthodoxos*, and out of St *Cyprian ad Demetrianum*; but my Deſign is not to fill this brief Diſcourſe with Quotations, and indeed there is no neceſſity for it, becauſe we have Scripture, the common ſenſe of Mankind, and the Faith of the beſt and pureſt Ages on our ſide.

Wherefore in the third place, I will ſhew what our Belief ought to be in this matter. We all know very well, that we are to believe as the Scripture directs, and herein we are taught that Heaven and Hell are fixed for *the two eternal ſtates* of good and bad Men; who if after this Life they had any hopes of gaining the firſt, or eſcaping the latter by the Prayers or the Gifts of their ſurviving Friends, this expectation would in a great meaſure fruſtrate the intent of Chriſt's coming into the World, which was to teach Men how in *this preſent life* they muſt work out their Salvation, how through patient continuance in well-doing they muſt here be brought to goodneſs and real vertue; the practice whereof in all probability would be quite laid aſide, if they ſhould depend upon ſuch fooliſh hopes, as theſe are. If we do but conſider the reaſon of thoſe promiſes and threatnings, which God

makes uſe of in Scripture to reclaim the Diſobedient, we muſt be convinced, that there can be no ſuch place as *Purgatory*. For promiſes and threatnings are made uſe of in Scripture to work upon our hopes and fears, two the moſt prevailing paſſions of the mind; we have the promiſe of preſent aſſiſtance to encourage our endeavours in a vertuous life, and to make this work the more eaſie, we have the aſſurance of a future reward. Whereas Religion would be thought in its ſtricteſt duties to be a burthen too heavy for Men to bear, if ſo be they ſhould once entertain the hopes of getting Heaven by *ſuch cheap and eaſie methods*, as the Church of *Rome* preſcribes: perſons that are her Proſelytes will not be wrought upon by that fear, which is the proper product of the threatnings of the Goſpel, when the moſt dreadfull condition, that can be feared hereafter may be avoyded, as they think, by the *charmes of Maſſes*, or *ſome legacy to the Church*. But theſe are *cunningly deviſed Fables*, which the Scripture warns us of; which Goſpel, becauſe of the terrours of it, is ſaid to be *the mighty power of God to ſalvation*: for great fear makes difficulties eaſie, it awakens all our powers, and quickens all our motions, it turns our feet into wings, and enables Men to doe many things with eaſe, which without ſo ſtrong a motive they would never be perſwaded to attempt. The lively apprehenſion of the danger of their Souls, and the ſad iſſues of a wicked life is enough to make the moſt profane Man ſtop his courſe, it will incite him to ſummon all his powers to reſiſt ſo great a miſchief as will undoe him for ever. Beſides the Commands of God are exceedingly ſweetned by Love, by all the imaginable obligations of Kindneſs; when we have conſidered how undutifully we have demeaned our

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ſelves towards him who is the great Beneſactour of our life, who hath recovered us from eternal deſtruction; with how much long-ſuffering he hath expected our amendment; what means he hath uſed to reconcile us to himſelf, by ſending his onely Son to dye, that we might live, to be made a ſpectacle of miſery and contempt, that he might bring us to happineſs and glory: he onely hath delivered us from Wrath and the Tormentour, when we lay open to the revenge of God's Juſtice. If we have any ſenſe of benefits, we cannot chuſe but love and obey him who hath done ſo much to oblige us; for his whole Religion preſents ſuch arguments and conſiderations to us as are apt to ſtir up all thoſe paſſions in our hearts, which are the great inſtruments to action; theſe are our hope, fear and love. But the workings of theſe paſſions muſt needs be ſtifled by a *lazy, ſuperſtitious devotion*, I mean that devotion of the Papiſts which is *produced by a belief of ſuch dreams as Purgatory.*

Let us therefore that are Proteſtants conſider, that the main work we are to doe in the time of this life, is to prepare for our immortal ſtate; for the time of this life is the day of exerciſe, wherein we are to make tryal of our ſtrength, and with all our powers to labour for Heaven, the way to which place lyes right before us, it is ſtrait and narrow, ſo that we muſt uſe ſome care and diligence, that we turn not to the right, nor to the left: the ways of Popery are like the paths of Sin, crooked and full of windings through *Cells* and *Cloyſters*, in long *Proceſſions* and *Pilgrimages*, wherewith Men are rather perplexed than their minds are improved, or their lives made better: by the practice of theſe things they are brought off from the true meaning of the

ſChriſtian Religion, and learn at laſt to content themelves with pompous ſhews inſtead of *living righteouſly, godly and ſoberly in this preſent world*: for how can the end of Religion be accompliſhed by this courſe, when in the place of juſtice, honeſty and goodneſs, ſimple and plain vertues, the People are brought up to ſhew ſo many *tricks*, and to act over ſo many *mimical poſtures* of Worſhip?

But thanks be to God, *we have not ſo learned Chriſt*: we came not into the World to be idle Spectatours therein, to be ſlothfull and unprofitable *Monks*, to gratifie our ſenſes, feed our luſts, or to live at eaſe, but to pay a *reaſonable ſervice to God*, and to promote the publick good; not to advance our own advantages and deſigns, but the common intereſt and benefit of Mankind. And as we are not to neglect our duty upon which the ſaving of our Souls depends, in expectation, that after this life is ended we may get *out of Purgatory* into Heaven; ſo we muſt not miſtake our time of doing our duty, but begin it,as ſoon as we come to the uſe of our reaſonand underſtanding, that aſſoon as our rational *powers* begin to move, Religion alſo may ſhew it ſelf at the ſame time with all the brightneſs and majeſty of truth and vertue. Therefore Men do mightily abuſe themſelves when they are led aſide by erroneous opinions concerning their future ſtate, and ſo looſe the happy occaſion of advancing their true intereſt: this they doe, who put off there living well to the laſt, who defer their Repentance with groundleſs hopes of having the ſame good ſucceſs as the Penitent Thief had, or who neglect all thoſe good means that would make them ſound and good Chriſtians out of a falſe perſwaſion, that their ſufferings hereafter will be but Temporary, and then they ſhall be as happy as the beſt Men are.

are. Some Philoſophical Perſons are miſtaken in this matter; for they will tell you, that they would rather chuſe not *to be* at all, than be placed in ſuch a condition of Life as that they ſhall be in danger of everlaſting puniſhment if they diſobey the Laws of God. Surely this cannot be the deſire of a good or a wiſe Man, as if a Man had better chuſe to live in the Woods in a wilde ſtate of confuſion and anarchy, than be ſubject to the Laws of a Juſt and Mercifull Ruler, under whom he may lead an happy and quiet life, merely becauſe he ſhall be puniſhed, if he doe amiſs. We are beholding to the infinite bounty and goodneſs of God, for that he hath given us all a Being; and when we were made, it was abſolutely neceſſary that we ſhould carefully obſerve and keep the Laws of Almighty God: but ſuch is the degeneracy of Mankind, that they would never doe this, unleſs there were ſevere penalties to be ſuffered for the violation of them; which penalties are eternal upon impenitent Sinners for this reaſon among others, becauſe the goodneſs and mercy of God is eminently ſhewn towards Men, both in threatning and inflicting theſe puniſhments; for hereby they may behold his ſeverity againſt ſin, and ſo break off the practice of it, that they may eſcape the puniſhments of the future ſtate; which are inflicted becauſe Men have been unreclaimable either by the mercies or ſeverities of God towards them in this life. The ſuffering theſe puniſhments God may accept of as a full ſatisfaction to his Law, if they be ſuch as tend to *break men off from ſin*, aſſert God's Right, and vindicate his honour to the World; for we muſt know that the end of puniſhment is not the ſatisfaction of anger in God as a deſire of revenge, but the deſign of it is to vindicate the honour and rights of the injured

jured Perſon by ſuch a way, as himſelf ſhall judge moſt ſatisfactory to the ends of his Government. But the miſery of any Creature cannot be an end to us, much leſs to the Divine nature, becauſe an End ſuppoſes ſomething deſirable for its ſelf: ſo that God neither doth nor can delight in the miſeries of his Creatures in themſelves, but as they are ſubſervient to the ends of his Government, and yet ſuch is his kindneſs in that reſpect too, that he uſes all means agreeable thereto to make them avoid being for ever miſerable. For there is a vaſt difference between the end of puniſhment in this Life, and in that which is to come; the puniſhments *in the life to come* are inflicted becauſe Sinners have been unreclaimable by either the *mercies or puniſhments of this Life*, and they are intended to deter Men from committing thoſe ſins which will expoſe them *to the wrath to come*. Let us therefore always laud and bleſs the Name of God, *in whom we live, move, and have our Being*, for that he hath raiſed us out of *nothing*, to be not onely Living, but Rational Creatures. Now we are bound to act according to the dignity of our Natures; if we do not, we degenerate into the lower Rank of *Animals*, and very deſervedly pull God's vengeance upon us for diſappointing the end of our Creation, which was to ſerve our Creatour in all Faithfulneſs and Truth, it being a fault never to be forgiven for any Creature to ſay, that he is not beholding to God for giving him a Being, unleſs he may be freed from the dreadfull apprehenſions of that everlaſting puniſhment which is due againſt all ſuch as wilfully offend ſo good and wiſe, ſo holy and juſt a God.

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Wherefore let no vain expectations of eſcaping the wrath to come betray us into ſo great a ſottiſhneſs as to put off our Repentance, or to defer making proviſion for Eternity: to be throughly regenerate is a harder task than to mumble over ſo many *Pater Noſter's* or *Ave-Mary* Prayers; I fear thoſe ignorant People whoſe Religion hangs on a *ſtring of Beads*, and whoſe Prayers are ſet *upon Tallies*, underſtand very little what true Sanctification imports, what reconciliation with the nature, will and mind of God ſignifies; unleſs we are thus qualified for the enjoyment of God, no Flames of *Purgatory* will ever prepare us for it.

Now therefore is the time of working out our Salvation; the next World will be the time of giving an account of what we have done, either good or evil; as this Life leaves us, ſo eternal Life will find us; what advantages then we have to day of knowing the will of God, and of learning his ſtatutes, let us make uſe of them, that we may be able to ſtand before his Judgment Seat, and receive the rewards of good and faithfull Servants: in order to the acquitting our ſelves well at this Bar, we have the direction of holy Scripture, which we may ſearch as curiouſly as we pleaſe; we have all God's inſtitutions to guide us; we have the aſſiſtance of God's Spirit to help and encourage our endeavours, and the promiſes of the Goſpel to aſſure us, that our labour ſhall not be in vain. Theſe are the benefits of the preſent time: but what warrant have we from Scripture that thoſe duties may be performed hereafter, which are now neglected? No, we are told the quite contrary, becauſe I called (ſaith God) and ye would not anſwer, I will then *laugh at your deſtruction, and mock when your fear cometh*: ſo St. *Luke*, 15.

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The rich Glutton is tormented, who was always ſpending his preſent time in Riot and Luxury; he applauds himſelf in his wiſedom and foreſight, when he had made ſuch plentifull proviſions for many years eaſe and pleaſure; but alas! how ſoon is his unprepared Soul ſurprized with a ſad arreſt of Death! how blank did the Fool then look, when he heard the fatal News, that that Night ſhould put an end to all his hopes! How was he confounded with the terrours of the other World? poor wretch! how did he tremble, when he found himſelf beſet with Devils and damned Spirits? On the other ſide *Lazarus is comforted*, becauſe he did his work in this World, through much poverty and hardſhip he got at laſt to Heaven.

This is the caſe of all Men; an eternity of happineſs or miſery awaits them hereafter: there is no other ſtate of things ſo great and ſo unalterable: the Divine Providence hath made uſe of all the beſt and wiſeſt methods to diſabuſe the enchanted reaſon of Man, that he may not be miſerable, but happy for ever: and if Men could be brought to reflect ſeriouſly on the diſmal and aſtoniſhing events of a wicked Life, they would never ſuffer themſelves to be ſo much impoſed upon by *Cheats* and *Impoſtours*, who recommend to them an *implicite Faith*, and a belief in ſuch a ſtate, as *Purgatory*; whereby their eyes are ſhut that they may not be affrighted by the ſight of their miſery. The fears of one Party betray Men into Superſtition, the vices of another into Atheiſm, the covetouſneſs of a third draws them into the moſt pernitious miſtakes about the World to come. But if Men would be at the pains to enquire into the affairs of Religion, and be not indifferent whether their condition hereafter be happy or miſerable, they will eaſily diſcover its principles to be

be highly reaſonable, and the keeping of its Commandments to be their higheſt intereſt, they will plainly ſee the paths of Truth and Bleſſedneſs, for it ſets down the moſt eaſie rules both for living well, and for believing right, becauſe errours in Belief are no leſs deſtructive of Chriſtianity and the ends thereof, than a general viciouſneſs of manners is. But if Men will be Fools and follow trifling opinions, no wonder if they periſh by their own folly; do they believe the *immortality of the Soul*, *a future ſtate*, or *a judgment to come*? if they believe all this, to what a degree of madneſs do they act that will venture the fury of an Almighty vengeance for the ſake of obeying one ſort of Men who have contrived New and Antiſcriptural Articles of Faith, who will run the hazard of forfeiting an eternal Happineſs, and of being caſt into an eternal Flame, becauſe they fanſie their Church is an infallible guide? whereas St. *Paul* (writing to the *Romans*) ſpeaks not one word of their privilege of infallibility, but rather puts them in fear in the 11. *Chap.* that they aſwell as the *Jews* were in danger of falling away: St. *Peter* alſo in his *Catholick Epiſtles* doth not once acquaint the Chriſtians, whom he writes to, what Guide they were to follow after his departure: there was no need for any ſuch thing, for they had all along told them that by following the Scripture they may be ſaved; having then an *infallible way*, there was no uſe, at leaſt no neceſſity of an *infallible Guide*.

But as the Church of *Rome* without any colour of reaſon ſets up for an infallible Guide in points of Controverſie, ſo with like boldneſs ſhe may lay claim, as ſome of her diſciples do, to demonſtration in matters of Faith, whereas if we will define Faith to be that aſſent by which we receive the word of God

as ſuch, and upon account thereof give our aſſent to all things which therein are propounded to us to be believed, then there are to be aſſigned two ſeveral acts of Faith, one of which is that judgment by which we acknowledge *that* word to be truly divine, the other is that aſſent which we give to all thoſe things that are contained therein: Faith in the former reſpect is leſs certain than Science, but in reſpect of adherence is more certain than the other. Now there cannot be ſo great a certainty in Faith as in Science, the *Mathematicks* for inſtance; becauſe Faith is more lyable to doubting than Science is: if any Man perceives the ſtrength and force of a *Geometrical Demonſtration*, he cannot in the mean while doubt of the concluſion: but now a true Believer doth often ſtruggle with doubting and unbelief, wherewith his Faith is aſſaulted, and yet it ceaſeth not to be true Faith. We muſt confeſs that the mind doth leſs clearly perceive this to be *the word of God*, than it doth thoſe things which are ſelf-evident, and the concluſions logically deduced from them: there is no reaſon therefore that any one ſhould fear to acknowledge that aſſent to be alſo leſs certain: notwithſtanding it follows not upon this account that Faith is uncertain, for That, which ariſes not to the certainty of Science, is not therefore uncertain; for although that certainty, which is called Moral, be of an inferiour degree to Demonſtration, yet it is a true certainty, leaves the mind ſatisfied and free from doubt. But how can a Man be ſaid to have a certainty greater than that of Science, when he hath not that certainty of evidence from the Arguments upon which the matter is grounded? It may be anſwered, that no Man can deny but there may be juſt cauſe why a Man may adhere to the objects of

of his Faith more ſtrongly than the Arguments brought for the truth thereof do require: for when a Man is ſufficiently perſwaded by due reaſons and arguments, that what is propounded to him for Divine Revelation, is indeed ſuch; this Man, if he duly attends and ſeriouſly conſiders, that it is God, who ſpeaks, he will be wholly bent to yield obedience thereunto, he will entertain the word of God with the higheſt veneration, he will cloſely adhere to it, and he will be fully reſolved to ſuffer and renounce all things rather than withdraw his aſſent from thoſe matters of Faith which are contained in it, and confirmed by it. From thence there ariſes in his mind a greater, or at leaſt a more effectual adherence to the Articles of his Faith, than there is in Science: for the mind ſo affected and diſpoſed doth more affectionately embrace, and more firmly hold that word of God, than any thing elſe, by what light ſoever it be propounded, or by whatever ſtrength of demonſtration it be confirmed; neither is there any knowledge which he doth ſo carefully retain, nor is there any aſſent which he will ſuffer ſo hardly or with ſuch difficulty to be forced from him: which firmneſs of Faith and ſtrong adherence of mind to the objects of it, is not produced by the evidence thereof, but by the great weight and moment of it; for the mind being enlightned by the holy Spirit, underſtands, that any other ſpeculative ſcientifical Doctrine doth little or nothing conduce to a happy and bleſſed life; but that on *This* our everlaſting happineſs doth depend, and that we cannot reject *This* without certain Ruine. Therefore we ought to take heed, that cunning Men do not deceive us; that we do not hearken to the Teachers of New Doctrines, which have no foundation in the Scripture; their pretences to

infallibility and demonſtration in matters of Faith are falſe and unreaſonable; for they aſſume theſe great and unwarrantabe privileges, onely to deceive the *Ignorant*, and to obtrude *fictitious articles* of Faith upon Mankind.

Wherefore all that now remains, is to make ſome ſhort Reflexions upon the Authours of *Purgatory*, and other new-invented Doctrines in the Church of *Rome*.

Firſt, They may be charged for impoſing upon our belief things contrary to reaſon, ſelf-inconſiſtent, and incongruous: of this I will give but one inſtance, which is their aſſerting, that the Bread and Wine in the Sacrament is changed into the *real and ſubſtantial Body and Bloud of Chriſt*. For this is the hardeſt thing that ever was put upon Men in any Religion; becauſe they cannot admit it, unleſs their reaſon be laid aſide, as no competent Judge in the matter; unleſs alſo they give the lye to the report of their ſenſes. And if we do this, how ſhall we think, that God made our Faculties true? which if he did not doe, we are abſolutely diſcharged from all duty to him, becauſe we have no faculty that can reſolve us, that *This is of God*: for if our reaſon muſt not be truſted, we muſt ceaſe to be Men; if our ſenſes are not to be believed, the chiefeſt proof of Chriſtianity falls to the ground; which was the ſight of thoſe, *who ſaw our Saviour*, after *he was riſen from the Dead*. Now if I may not believe the reaſon of my mind in conjunction with three or four of my ſenſes; how ſhall I know, that any thing is *this* or *that*: therefore I ſay, that this Doctrine is a groſs invention of Men, contrary *both to reaſon and ſenſe*.

Secondly, The Truths they do acknowledge, are made

made void by ſubtile diſtinctions, or equivocations: as for example, their Doctrine of probability and of directing the intention; if a Man can find any Doctour among them, that held ſuch an opinion, it makes that Doctrine probable: and there is nothing ſo contrary to the rules of vertue and conſcience, but what ſome *Romiſh caſuiſtical* Doctour hath reſolved to be good and practicable: juſt as *Tully* ſays, there is nothing ſo abſurd or ridiculous, which ſome *Philoſopher* or other hath not maintained and aſſerted. So by directing their intention, they may declare that which is falſe, and deny that which is true, becauſe they intend the credit of their Church and Religion; this mere intention ſhall excuſe them from the guilt of downright falſhood and lying. They are ſo well practiſed in equivocations, that you cannot confide in any words they ſpeak; they are ſo ambiguous, and of ſuch doubtfull meaning: in their evaſions their Speech ſhall bear a double ſenſe, whereas no Man ought to uſe wit and parts to impoſe upon another, or to make a Man believe That, which he doth not mean. For the Chriſtian Law is plain and obvious, void of all ambiguity or enſnaring ſpeeches, free from all *Sophiſtications*, and *windings of Language*, never flies to words of a dubious or uncertain ſignification, but plainly declares the truth to Men: therefore theſe practices are contrary to that ſimplicity and plain-heartedneſs, which ought to be in the converſation of every Chriſtian.

Thirdly, They ſuper-add to Religion things altogether unlikely to be true, and diſhonourable to God; which will appear in theſe following particulars.

I. The uſe of Images in the Worſhip of God, an Idolatry they are too guilty of, otherwiſe they would never

never leave out the Second Commandment, and divide the Tenth into two to conceal it from the People. We find better Doctrine than this, among the *Philoſophers*, who ſay, God is to be Worſhipped by Purity of Mind: for this is a rational ſervice, and a worſhip moſt ſuitable to an immaterial Being; it being the uſe of that in us, which is the higheſt and nobleſt of our Faculties.

II. The veneration of Reliques; a very vain and fooliſh thing; for there can be no certainty at this diſtance of time, *what they are*, and if they were indeed, what they are taken for, what veneration is, or can be due to them? For *inanimate* things are far inferiour to thoſe that have life, and for the living to worſhip things that are dead, is unaccountable and irrational.

III. The Invocation or Worſhip of *Angels* and *Saints*, our Fellow-creatures, particularly of the *Virgin Mary*, to whom they make more Prayers than to our Saviour himſelf; although her Name be not mentioned *in all the Epiſtles of the Apoſtles*; although Chriſt himſelf, as foreſeeing the degeneracy of the Church in this thing, did ever reſtrain all extravagant imaginations of honour due to her; yet the adoration of her is the moſt conſiderable part of their Religion. But why ſhould a Man ſo proſtitute himſelf, as to Worſhip thoſe, I am ſure, God would not have me Worſhip: for he would not have us adore any Creature, as the Apoſtle argues, *Col.* 2. 18. it is but *a ſhew of humility to worſhip Angels*, who are placed in the higheſt order of Creatures, and if they are not to be Worſhipped, ſure none below them are: and God hath declared, there is but *one ſupreme ſelf-exiſtent Being*, and one Mediatour between God and Man, *the Man Chriſt Jeſus*.

IV. They

IV. They withhold the uſe of Scripture from the People, becauſe, they ſay, Knowledge of the very Oracles of God will make them contentious and diſobedient to Authority: if this be true, then the blame of all this muſt be laid upon our bleſſed Saviour, for revealing ſuch a Doctrine to the World as this is, and thereby we ſhould condemn the Apoſtles for making known ſuch a Doctrine to Men, in a Tongue they underſtand; but I ſuppoſe, the Papiſts are not willing to lay all the miſcarriages of the World upon Chriſt and his Apoſtles. Although Men may abuſe the Knowledge of the Scripture, yet the abuſe of a thing that is uſefull, was never accounted a ſufficient reaſon for the taking it away: therefore Men are not to be hindred from the Knowledge of the Scriptures, for fear they ſhould become proud or rebellious; for this would be, as if one ſhould put out a Man's eyes, that he might the better follow him, or that he might not looſe his way: for there is nothing in the whole Doctrine of our bleſſed Saviour, which is unfit for any Man to know; but what is plainly deſigned to promote holineſs and the practice of a good life: the *Romaniſts* do indeed pretend, that the unity and peace of the Church cannot be maintained, unleſs the People be kept in ignorance: then the miſchief will be, that for the end of keeping Peace and Unity in the Church, Church and Chriſtian will be both loſt; which would be, as if a Prince ſhould knock all his Subjects on the Head, to keep them quiet. 'Tis true, this would be an effectual way to procure it, but by theſe means he muſt loſe his Kingdom, and make himſelf no Prince into the bargain. 'Tis no doubt, but if Men were ignorant enough, they would be quiet; but then the conſequences of it would be, that they *would ceaſe to be Men.*

Laſt-

Laſtly, They fruſtrate the effects of real Religion by their Pretences to extraordinary Power and Privileges; that is, they pretend to make that lawfull, which is unlawfull: *Bellarmine* ſaith, that the Pope may declare *vice to be vertue*, and *vertue vice*: by this practice they attempt to change *the reaſon of things*, which all Mankind agree to be unalterable. By this pretended Power they can turn *attrition* into *contrition*; that is, they can make ſuch a conſternation of mind, as fell upon *Judas*, when he went and hanged himſelf, to be contrition by the Prieſt's Abſolution: they can make bodily Pennance to be of equal validity with an inward change of mind, and true Repentance: they pretend they can produce, by I know not what *magical force*, ſtrange ſpiritual effects by vertue of Holy Water and the Croſs: they are alſo much puff't up with a Power they aſſume of Abſolving Men from ſolemn Oaths and Obligations; they boaſt much of the Efficacy of Indulgences for the pardon of ſin, and for the delivery of Souls out of Purgatory; by which Invention they detract from the efficacy of God's Grace, as if it were not ſufficient to prepare us for, and at laſt to bring us to Heaven, unleſs we paſs through this *imaginary Purgation* after Death; by which alſo they themſelves are deceived, whilſt they couple *Prayer for the Dead* and *Purgatory* together, as if the one did neceſſarily ſuppoſe or imply the other. But they do not: for though the ſins of the Faithfull be privately and particularly forgiven at the day of Death, yet the publick promulgation of their pardon is to come at the day of Judgment. Chriſtians then may be allowed to Pray for this conſummation of Bleſſedneſs, when *the Body ſhall be reunited to the Soul*: ſo we pray, as often as we ſay, *Thy Kingdom come*, or *come Lord Jeſus*,

Jeſus, come quickly: this is far enough from being a Prayer to deliver them out of *Purgatory*; beſides, the *Roman* Church is not able to produce any one Prayer, publick or private, nor one Indulgence, for the delivery of any one Soul out of *Purgatory*, in all the Primitive times, or out of their own ancient *Miſſals*, or Records.

All theſe things before mentioned are not to be juſtified; but thus the Papiſts have endeavoured to ſpoil the beſt Religion that ever was made known unto Men. Whereas the Chriſtian Religion, as it is profeſſed in *the Reformed Church*, is quite another thing: for it doth neither perſecute, nor hold any principles of faction or diſturbance, but onely thoſe of peace and obedience to the Laws of God and Man: if there be any agitatours of Miſchief and Treaſon, it is the fault of particular Parties, and not to be charged upon the *Reformed Church*: which Church holds the Worſhip of God, and all other offices of Religion to be performed in the *Vulgar Tongue*, ſo that Knowledge may be thereby had and promoted; which Knowledge of Religion if any Man doth abuſe for the ends of Pride, Rebellion or Hereſie, he doth it at his own peril, and God will judge him for it. But St. *Paul* is ſo far from allowing any Service to God *in an unknown Tongue*, that he calls it *a piece of madneſs*, 1 Cor. 14. 23. *If the whole church be come together into one place, and all ſpeak with divers tongues, and there come in the unlearned, will not they ſay that you are mad*, that is, *they may juſtly ſay ſo*. Now a Man would wonder, that any ſociety of Men retaining the Name of Chriſtians, ſhould zealouſly preſs that to be neceſſary for the Chriſtian Church, which St. *Paul* hath ſaid *to be a piece of madneſs*. The ſame Reformed Church owns the free uſe of the Scriptures both in publick

and private, calls upon Men as our Saviour did, to *ſearch* them; for theſe make *the man of God perfect*, and do *richly furniſh him for every good work*, and by their help we are able *to render a reaſon of the hope that is in us.* We do declare, that the Preachers of the Church ought not to take away the Key of Knowledge from the People, as our Saviour charges the *Phariſees*; or as St. *Auguſtine* ſaith, They do not command Faith in Men upon peril of Damnation, to ſhew their ſuperiority: but they appear as Officers to direct and give Counſel: not with Pride to rule, but in Compaſſion to lead others into the way of Truth, and to recover them out of miſtakes. In ſhort, we tell the People, that the Scripture is the onely rule of their faith, that it is full and perſpicuous in all matters neceſſary for good life and practice; ſo that if they uſe diligence and mind them well, they may eaſily underſtand them, and be ſatisfied; we never demand any *implicite Faith* from them, neither do we expect that they ſhould reſign up their Faculties, as others believe blindfold and without Reaſon. Therefore the *Reformed Church* is honeſt in all its dealings, doth not deceive Men by any ways of fraud or falſhood, ſuch as the whole Doctrine of Merit is, and the Relieving of Souls out of *Purgatory* by Maſſes. But there is a place in the World, where, *cælum eſt venale Deuſque*, Heaven and God himſelf is ſet to ſale.

The premiſſes conſidered, we may conclude, that the Church of *England* had good reaſon to declare in her twenty ſecond Article, that *The* Romiſh *Doctrine concerning Purgatory, Pardons, Worſhipping and Adoration, aſwell of Images as of Reliques, and alſo Invocation of Saints, is a fond thing, vainly invented, and grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the word of God.* For

For the whole Scripture is againſt *Purgatory*; wherein we reade, 1 *Joh.* 1. 7. *That the bloud of Jeſus Chriſt cleanſeth us from all ſin*; that the Children of God who dye in Chriſt, do *reſt from their labours*; that as they are abſent from the Lord, while they are in the body; ſo when they are abſent from the body, *they are preſent with the Lord*, Joh. 5. 24. they come not into Judgment, but paſs from Death to Life.

The ſame Doctrine is taught by the ancient Fathers of the Church: *Tertullian* ſays, it is an Injury to Chriſt, to maintain, that ſuch as be called from hence by him, are in a ſtate, that ſhould be *pitied*. Thus St. *Cyprian* affirms, the Servants of God to have Peace and Reſt, aſſoon as they are withdrawn from the ſtorms of this lower World. And *Hilary obſerves* in the Goſpel of the *Rich Man*, and *Lazarus*, that every one is ſent either *to Abraham's boſome*, or *to torments*, aſſoon as this Life is ended. St. *Baſil* declares this World to be the time of Repentance, the other of Retribution; this of Working, that of receiving a Reward. So *Nazianzen* in his Funeral Orations plainly denies, that after this Life, there is any *purging* to be expected; and therefore he tells us, that it is better to be *purged* now, than be ſent into torments, where the time of *puniſhing* is, and not of *purging*. St. *Hierome* alſo comforts *Paula* for the Death of her Daughter after this manner; let the Dead be lamented; but let us whom Chriſt cometh forth to meet after our departure, be the more grieved, becauſe

Tertul. *lib. de patien. ch.* 9.

Cyprian. *de Mortali. ſect.* 2. *edit. Goulart.*

Hilar. *in Pſal.* 2.

St. Baſil. *Proœm. in Regulas, &c.*

Nazianz. *orati.* 9. *ad* Julianum.

Hierom. *Epiſt.* 25.

cauſe ſo long as we remain here, we are Pilgrims from God.

I could cite more Fathers to this purpoſe; but the Teſtimonies of theſe may ſuffice to ſhew, that all were not of *Bellarmine*'s mind, as he pretends by his precarious aſſertion, that Antiquity conſtantly taught, there was a *Purgatory*. Whereas the *Grecians* are ſo far from being of his Faith, that they do not believe it at this day. The oldeſt and beſt Authours, that I know to be on his ſide, are *Plato* in his *Gorgias* and *Phædo*, *Tully* in the end of the Dream of *Scipio*, and *Virgil* in his ſixth *Eneide*. *Tertullian* likewiſe, when he was an Heretick, ſeemed to favour his opinion, and *Origen* was very much of that Belief, who acknowledges no other puniſhment after this life, but *Purgatory*-pains onely. Notwithſtanding the *Romiſh* Clergy have the confidence to impoſe this extravagant Doctrine upon the World now, it was never heard of in the Church for the ſpace of a thouſand years after the Birth of our Saviour: when *Thomas Aquinas* and other Fryars had framed the cheat; the Doctours of the *Greek* Church did publickly oppoſe it: afterwards the Pope and his Agents prevailed ſo far in the Council at *Florence*; that for Peace ſake they were contented to yield: *That the middle ſort of Souls were in a place of Puniſhment, but whether that were Fire, Darkneſs and Tempeſt, or ſomething elſe, they would not contend.* But as I have ſaid, the *Greek* Church, the *Muſcovites* and *Ruſſians*, the *Cophtites* and *Abaſſines*, the *Georgians* and *Armenians*, could never be brought to ſubmit to it.

Concil. Florentin. Seſſ. 25.

But this opinion, with ſome others no leſs abſurd and ridiculous, came into the World, when Ignorance and Intereſt had fatally depraved the Primitive purity

purity of the Chriſtian Faith and Worſhip. The Broachers of theſe Fictions are very crafty and induſtrious in contriving ways, how they may faſten them upon credulous People; and although it is more, than an *hundred years* ſince our Anceſtours threw off the Pope's Tyranny; yet if he doth not meet with a proportionable zeal in their Poſterity, to oppoſe his deſigns; it will not be hard to conjecture the ſucceſs of a vigorous attacque, and a faint defence.

As therefore we are Members of a Chriſtian Church, in which we may aſſuredly find Salvation, if we continue in it, let us be firmly united among our ſelves againſt all innovatours in Religion. As we have no other rule of Faith and practice, than the Holy Scripture, let us reject all notorious innovations, that are obtruded upon us for *fundamentals*. As we are taught to be obedient to the ſupreme Magiſtrate, not onely *for Wrath*, but *Conſcience ſake*; ſo we are bound to avoid the Communion of that Church, which claims a Power of depoſing him, and of knocking thoſe on the head, who keep cloſe to *the Faith once delivered to the Saints*.

What obligations then have we to *the Church*, we are of, and to the Religion we profeſs, which hath deliverd us from the Laws of the *Roman* Religion, that are written in Bloud; that hath recovered us from the Idolatrous practice of the heathen World; that will not ſuffer us to Worſhip Images, or fall down to the ſtock of a Tree; that doth not rob us of the benefit of publick Prayers, by putting them into an unknown tongue; that doth not enjoin an implicite Faith, or blind obedience, but allows to every Chriſtian a judgment *of Diſcretion*, who keeps within the bounds of due obedience and ſubmiſſion to his lawfull

full Superiours; that he may *prove all things, hold fast That, which is good*; a Church, that hath no pardons at a set price for guilty persons, no forged miracles to amuse the credulous and ignorant, no *pompous shews, Beads, Tickets, Agnus Dei's, Rosaries*, to please the Vulgar, or to gratifie the Superstitious.

If therefore we have any love of our Religion, or any concern for the happiness of our Church and Nation; if we have any desire to hold the freedom of our Consciences, or any care for the eternal safety of our Souls, it behoves us to beware of the *Emissaries* of *Rome*, in whose success we must expect to forfeit all these interests; every one of which ought to be dearer to us, than our *lives*.

Let us not be imposed upon by the specious Name of *Roman Catholick*; it is a mere contradiction, one of the *Pope's Bulls*; as if he should say, *universal particular*, a *Catholick Schismatick*. Let us not be afraid to encounter this pretended *Catholick* with the Councils and Fathers; though these are a Labyrinth, an intangled Wood, which *Papists* love to fight in, not so much with hope of victory, as to hide the shame of an open overthrow; which in this kind of *combat*, many of our Divines have given them. But let them bound their Disputations on the Scripture onely, and an ordinary Protestant, well read in the Bible, may turn and wind their ablest Doctours; for as among *Papists*, their ignorance in the Scripture chiefly upholds Popery; so among *Protestants*, the frequent and serious reading thereof will soonest baffle it. And we need not doubt of an entire conquest, if we add to this the amendment of our lives *with all speed*; lest through impenitency, pride, luxury, bold and open Atheism, uncha-

uncharitable jarring and pelting at one another; through ſtubborn diſobedience to the Laws of God and Man, we run into that *ſottiſhly*, which we ſeek ſo *warily* to avoid, the worſt of Superſtitions, that enervates and deſtroys the whole deſign of *Chriſtianity*.

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